

# GREAT IDEAS

from

*HEALTHY START*



Prepared by Janet Reed

for the

Healthy Start Field Office

October, 1996

Healthy Start Field Office, CRESS Center, Division of Education, UC Davis, CA 95616-8729

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Parents Trained as Family Research Teams .....	5
Parent/Teacher Conferences Used as Collection Point .....	5
Strategy to Ensure Participation From All Ethnic Groups .....	5
Community Events Draw Wide Participation .....	6
Student Focus Groups Bring Forth Ideas .....	6
Gathering Information From Differing Points of View .....	6

##### Focus on Outcomes for Children and Families

Outcomes Matrix I .....	7
Outcomes MatrixII .....	7

#### 2. STRATEGIES TO MOBILIZE PARENT AND COMMUNITY-INVOLVEMENT

##### Increasing Parent Involvement and Support

School Registration Introduces Healthy Start .....	9
Spanish and Filipino Radio Stations an Effective .....	9
Outreach Medium .....	9
"Family Academy" Offers Family Support Curriculum .....	9
Child Care Provided by Family Life Students .....	10
Restructuring Supports Parent Mobilization .....	10
"Parents Rally Around Action Not Meetings" .....	10
Middle School Parents Develop Action Plan .....	11

##### Job Training for Parents Helps Families Succeed

School Bus Brings Parents to Job Training Classes .....	11
Healthy Start Serves as Bridge to Employment .....	11
Seasonal Unemployment Turned to Advantage .....	11
Focus on Jobs Energizes Community .....	11
Parents Trained to Staff HS Sites, Gain Job Skills .....	12

##### Mobilizing Primary and Informal Supports

Community Co-op Food Program .....	12
Parents and Realtors Tackle Housing Needs .....	12
City Redevelopment Agency Helps to Address Housing .....	12
Parents Assisted to Form Youth Sports League .....	13
Disaster Preparation at School Sites .....	13

## **RECONFIGURING RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS**

### **Academic Success for Students**

School Admissions Committee Plays Key Role in Identifying Need -----	15
School Library Open After School -----	15
Parents Learn How to Help Children with Homework -----	15
Homework Center Staffed by Parents Improves English Skills -----	15
Title I Twilight Classes Boost Students' Academic Success -----	16
Literacy Programs Support Success for Children and Parents -----	16
Local Business Develops Mentors for Teens -----	16
School Staff Association joins With PTA to Create Homework Clubs -----	16
Community Agencies Support School Restructuring -----	17
Elementary School Helps Reduce Dropouts From Middle/ High School -----	17
Student Portfolios Reinforce Positive Accomplishments -----	17
Juvenile Hall Linked to District Student Records Center -----	17

### **Improving Health to Improve Success for Students**

Primary Prevention of Dental Disease -----	18
Head Start Teams to Provide Health Education -----	18
Medi-Cal Managed Care Outreach Coordination -----	18
EPSDT School Nurse Unit Created -----	19
Urban Farm and Garden Improves Nutrition -----	19
School Tackles Cancer and Cardiovascular Disease Among Latinos -----	19
Hospital to School Transition Improved -----	20

### **Integration and Blending of Funding to Support Healthy Start Programs**

Funding Streams Combined to Fund Family Advocates -----	20
Two Counties Cooperate to Provide Services to Rural Area -----	20
Categorical Funding for Students Blended at One Site -----	21
Case Management Targets Children with Relative Caregivers -----	21
Collaborative Provided Information and Referral Training -----	21
For All Partners -----	21

## INTRODUCTION

"Great Ideas From Healthy Start" is a sampling of promising creative ideas, gleaned from three years of program experience across the state, that address common issues faced by school linked programs. Since Healthy Start began, over 200 sites have come on line throughout California in inner-city neighborhoods, rapidly growing suburban towns, rural farming areas, and isolated mountain and desert outposts. A rich store of inventive approaches has emerged to improve outcomes for children and youth from all ages, ethnic, and language groups.

Although each school and community has its own challenges and opportunities, school linked services face a set of common issues: how to best understand the strengths and needs of the school and community, what strategies will increase parental involvement, what primary and informal supports can be mobilized, and to what extent can the resources of the school and collaborative partners be reconfigured to best achieve desired outcomes. The pamphlet is organized to follow a developmental approach from planning the community assessment to implementing services, and to present one or more approaches to an issue. Not all ideas will be useful or even appropriate

to all sites, but open-minded readers may come across one or perhaps several useful ideas, or be stimulated to take the germ of an idea and adapt it to their own unique circumstances.

The suggestion to compile a pamphlet of "great ideas" arose from many people involved in Healthy Start who recognized that sharing information has power to stimulate thought and problem solving. The ideas compiled here are not meant to represent the best or the last word, nor to cover all of the issues that sites may need to address, but simply to present some creative approaches which may be useful in similar situations. It is not intended that this booklet be used as a pattern book of ideas to be copied, but it may shed light or point to avenues not previously considered by a local planning group. Sprinkled throughout are "Idea Nuggets": ideas and approaches often successfully adopted by more than one site.

The pamphlet is intended for copying and distributing in part or whole, in the anticipation that parents, students, school staff, providers, and community members may each use it to enrich their own perspectives as they work together to improve school linked services for children and youth.

## UNDERSTANDING THE STRENGTHS AND NEEDS OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

*The first challenge to be faced by each school site and its' collaborative partners is to develop a detailed understanding of child, family and community strengths and needs. The well-conducted strengths and needs assessment and careful analysis of data to understand causes, consequences and interrelationships will help to understand and later to address root causes rather than superficial needs of children and families. Exploration of how members of different cultural or language groups experience or are affected by issues, and the different perspectives of school staff and providers is necessary to fully inform the development of services and supports. Strategies for service delivery will be built upon existing strengths, and respond to the most pressing needs identified by the collaborative and especially as felt by the parents, as well as to longer term prevention and wellness promoting goals.*

### **Parents Trained as Family Research Teams**

In Largely Latino neighborhood, 10 Family Research Teams consisting of 2 parents each received 4 hours of training, rehearsed interview techniques and, using a standardized interview format, interviewed 10 families each randomly chosen from the school population. The same parents then participated in the analysis of the data they collected and compared it to other data about their neighborhood and to state and national data, and related their school and neighborhood status to national priorities for health and education. **Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)**

### **Parent Teacher Conferences Used as Collection Point For Family Surveys**

A 63% response rate was obtained in a K-6 school when English and Spanish language surveys were sent to parents a week before parent-teacher conference week and parents were asked to return the questionnaires when they came in for their conference. A committee of parents, school staff, and providers had jointly developed and pre-tested the survey form until parents were satisfied with its completeness. In the process, participants alerted other parents to the importance of the survey. Facilities and help were provided at conferences for parents who could not read in either language. **Morgan Hill (Santa Clara County)**

### **Strategy To Ensure Participation of Parents From All Ethnic Groups**

In an area undergoing an "abrupt, wrenching transition" in ethnic makeup, understanding the needs and strengths of families and the neighborhoods was a daunting, yet critical ingredient in designing Healthy Start services. For 18 months the collaborative had held neighborhood meetings, translated surveys into 8 languages, and conducted several focus groups for different ethnic groups. Still, the initial return rate for some groups was as little as half the overall rate (64%). By working with parents, translators, and neighborhood associations for outreach (including phone and door to door contact), response rates for all groups was brought to within 10% of that of the highest group. The data gathered could be disaggregated by ethnic group with some confidence in its validity. The reticence of some groups to respond, as well as the success of follow-up strategies in improving response rate was a finding with significant implications for

shaping the service delivery system. **Elk Grove (Sacramento County)**

### **Community Events Draw Wide Participation**

A small, isolated mountain community where families live at great distance from the school, often in self-selected isolation, and proud of their self-sufficiency, conducted a series of community events providing opportunities for family members and providers to gather together. A kick-off "community celebration picnic ... featured food, games, live music, a treasure hunt ... cost all of about \$50, with the rest ... donated by community members. The completed survey became a person's ticket to a free BBQ. Members of the collaborative spent time talking individually to people ... deriving additional input. Murals allowed people to express additional ideas. Children enjoyed making handprints and painting their ideas on "What would help you do better in school?." The vision of Healthy Start was introduced, refined and expanded at this and other small game nights, breakfasts, and church meetings until a substantial portion of the community had been drawn into the process. **Southern Trinity (Trinity County)**

### **Student Focus Groups Bring Forth Ideas**

A K-6 school used focus groups to obtain the perspectives of students currently enrolled and also from former students now enrolled in continuation school. "It was felt that the perspectives of the (continuation school) students would be particularly valuable in shedding light on the problems ... based on first hand experience of students who have gone through the system and had difficulty." **Morgan Hill (Santa Clara County)**

### **Gathering Information From Differing Points of View**

In order to gather and analyze data from multiple points of view, a large collaborative

of 5 schools with over 6,000 students undertook a comprehensive process which included primary and secondary sources. Key **informant interviews** were conducted with parents, students, school staff, representatives from local housing projects, health, human service and juvenile justice providers, counselors, representatives of local businesses, and City Councilmen. A **Saturday Town Hall meeting** (child care and door prizes provided) facilitated, disaggregated focus groups for ethnic groups, fathers, mothers of older children, and line workers of support agencies. **Case studies and school records** were systematically reviewed and analyzed; Student Study Team findings for children in each school were reviewed; attendance records and medical referrals were reviewed for a one month period during the planning period; and the student profiles from each school were compared to other, comparable schools in the district. **Census and other needs assessments** conducted by the United Way and other city and county planning bodies were obtained and reviewed. Based on the review, the collaborative was able to analyze in depth the relationships between academic performance, behavior problems and the complex socio-economic challenges faced by the families in the schools. **Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)**

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- Several schools gave donated pizza vouchers to the class(es) with 100% return of parent surveys.
- The authentic voices of parents, students, teachers and community members lent clarity and credibility to the analysis of needs and strengths when they were asked to describe in their own words what services would be most useful to them instead of selecting from a "laundry list" of possible services.
- Local business people in the immediate neighborhoods of schools were solicited

for their perspectives during the assessment process. In several cases this spurred the involvement of the merchants in other aspects of the process including provision of some goods and services.

- Parent generated telephone trees were conducted to inform parents of community meetings and to increase the rate of return of parent surveys.
- Customer satisfaction” surveys were conducted with high school students who had been students in the elementary or middle schools undertaking Healthy Start needs/ strengths assessments.
- Local churches were virtually the only viable institutions other than schools in some communities and seeking their input during the needs assessment phase provided valuable perspective on family needs and strengths. Often it sparked a close involvement with the churches service projects such as emergency food and clothing

## Focusing on Outcomes for Children and Families

*A crucial part of the planning process is to agree on what it is that the collaborative wants to be different as a result of the Healthy Start process. In what ways will the condition of children and families be improved? What objectives and strategies are most likely to achieve the outcomes desired? The evaluation process will measure the extent to which these outcomes have been achieved; accordingly, a thoughtful process to define achievable outcomes becomes a critical task for the collaborative. Two different approaches are presented below which were used by their collaboratives to help them zero in on selection of outcomes. Both involved using matrices to isolate criteria they considered crucial in identifying appropriate outcomes for their quite different communities.*

## Outcomes Matrix I

An elementary school in LA developed a scoring matrix to help them focus in on objectives most likely to result in improved outcomes. "Each objective is given a score from one to four-plus for the following: Priority, Realism, Restructuring, Manageability, Concentration, and Feedback. .. A **realism** score is awarded ... based on evidence of previous success in reaching the objective in (the local community), previous national experience, development of a promising new approach and adequacy of resources. How promising is the strategy based on **restructuring** of services to reach objectives? Each is scored on the basis of changes in agency policies and procedures, changes in the structures of the sponsoring agencies and strength of changes in agency policies and procedures. Is the program **manageable** given the number and quality of staff members, strength of the parent group, managerial experience of the staff and clarity of the plan? ... How powerfully are the (proposed) programs concentrated on the stated outcomes to be reached? A **concentration** score is awarded each objective based on the use of available staff, efforts to mobilize parent support, selection of collaborating partners and the application of budget priorities. In the design of programs is there adequate attention **to feedback**?" Each objective was further subjected to analysis addressing quality assurance monitoring, policy responsiveness, and measures of community impact. **Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)**

## Outcomes Matrix III

In order to concentrate on outcomes which were **achievable, measurable, and verifiable** through currently existing school, city, or county indices, one site developed criteria against which potential strategies and outcomes were measured:

- **Scope** - how many people will benefit?
- **Urgency** - what deadlines exist?
- **Practicality** - can this problem be solved?

- **Preparation for Something Bigger** - will this lead to greater investments?
- **Capacity** - do necessary resources exist?
- **Coordination Potential** - will this lead to increased collaboration?
- **Political Acceptability**- is key support present (or opposition lacking)?
- **Special Ability** - can only Healthy Start effect this solution?
- **Good Will** - will this have a salutary effect on public opinion?

**Elk Grove (Sacramento County)**



## STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND PROVIDE FAMILY SUPPORT

*Healthy Start acknowledges the importance of parents as active participants from the very beginning. Collaboratives struggle to increase parent participation with varying degrees of success. In several examples cited here, the partnerships demonstrate a degree of parent involvement which moves far beyond token participation. Participation of parents in the planning and development of a Healthy Start proposal was in itself a powerful intervention increasing parent and community capacities for self-sufficiency. An equally important premise is the need to move beyond a problem-focused service approach to one which joins with the community to support the healthy growth and development of all children. Mobilizing primary and informal supports to support the recreation and community service activities creates a synergy drawing communities together. The examples cited took unusual advantage of sometimes overlooked opportunities to build supports for children and families in the community.*

### **Increasing Parent Involvement and Support**

#### **School Registration Introduces Parents and Students to Healthy Start Activities**

School registration (at the beginning of the year, and throughout the year for newly enrolling students) served as a natural time to introduce students and parents to Healthy Start activities. Parent mentors, Healthy Start staff and school staff met with parents and students to review the family and student needs and link them with appropriate services as well as involving them in activities in support of the school.

#### **Spanish and Filipino Language Radio Programs an Effective Outreach Medium**

The needs assessment in a rural area of farm-laboring families revealed a lack of awareness of existing services and a need to find ways of communicating with parents who worked long hours and were often isolated from services. Radio in Spanish and Filipino dialects proved an effective method to reach mono-lingual and limited English proficiency speakers about Healthy Start activities. **Delano (Kern County)**

#### **"Family Academy" Offers Comprehensive Family Support Curriculum**

A three-site collaborative pooled school and provider resources to offer a comprehensive menu of family support classes in English and Spanish. Planned offerings included parenting education, family health and safety education, child abuse prevention and education, life skills training, information about community resources, vocational enrichment classes, job training, ESL, and workshops on leadership and governance. A co-op child care program was envisioned to allow more parents to participate. **Paso Robles (San Luis Obispo County)**

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- Even Start Family Literacy grants, Title VII assistance to LEP students, and Healthy Start all require parent education and family education activities, which several sites successfully combined with Healthy Start in coordinated activity calendars or jointly funded positions.

### **Child Care at Site Provided by Students in Family Life Class**

A school district in an area with few child care resources wanted to provide child care so parents could attend Healthy Start activities. At the same time Family Life Studies classes needed "labs" for hands-on child care experience. Everyone benefited when students volunteered to provide child care at the Center and were able to earn school credits for this service. The Center also provided a place for teens to learn about child development, something they had asked for during the needs assessment process. **Strathmore (Tulare County)**

### **Restructuring Supports Parent Mobilization**

A Los Angeles area noted for high drug and crime rates is also an entry point for many immigrants, resulting in 75% limited English proficiency rate for entering students. Restructuring programs in the two elementary schools were a critical factor in increasing parental involvement in education. In combination with a community health clinic, parents and school staff worked for two years to develop parent/teacher leadership teams, and a parent group of 50 who meet weekly for education in parenting and life skills education. Parents assisted in development of the needs/ strengths assessments and went into the community to complete family interviews. From this initial investment, a parent security force evolved to monitor doors and gates, and other parent volunteers became active in classrooms and lunchrooms.

Weekly Saturday morning work parties bring together parents, teachers, and administrators to clean and beautify the school campus and prepare activities for the children. Parent /teacher Leadership teams and the categorical advisory councils work together to plan school activities and have allocated funds to support Community Representatives and staff training for the

Healthy Start program. The next step envisioned is to acquire non-profit status for the collaborative to attract and flexibly use funds from public and private sources . "Parent see themselves as being able to deliver on a promise to their children with the help of the Collaborative." **Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)**

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- "Contracts" for parent volunteers are used at several -sites to specify the responsibilities of volunteer and site staff for the activities to be performed by the parent volunteers and the support and supervision to be provided by the staff. Both volunteers and school site staff appreciate how the agreements help everyone to take their responsibilities seriously. Staff appreciate the dependability of volunteers who in turn express satisfaction at having their significant contributions recognized.

### **"Parents Rally Around Action, Not Meetings"**

The desire for increased evening activities at one school site led parents to realize that poor street lighting was a barrier to attendance; people simply didn't feel safe near the school after dark. When the need was identified, it "set up a chain of events; organizing meetings, petitions" to municipal authorities. The success of these activities got the parents mobilized to request and organize outreach, car-pools, and on-site sign-up for ESL classes, and to recruit more parents into their Parent Advocate teams. **Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County)**

### **Idea Nugget!**

- Many sites noted that the key to successful parent involvement was the one-to-one contact by enthusiastic parents who had already experienced the power of community action on behalf of themselves and their children. These parents then talked with, recruited and were role models for their friends, relatives, and neighbors as the natural networks of the community became aware of something new and hopeful happening at the school.

### **Middle School Parents Develop Action Plan**

In addition to their role in governance of a Healthy Start collaborative, a middle school's parents group developed their own action plan which included specific objectives related to the collaborative's desired outcomes. The parents goals were to: double the number of parent volunteers at the school site, with an emphasis on after school activities such as sports and monitoring the homework center; create a safe path home for after-school and extended day activities; be trained to identify, monitor, and report problem alcohol outlets; be trained in information and referral; develop and present parent education on teen pregnancy issues to other parents; and act as mentors to in-coming parents. **Salinas (Monterey County)**

### **Job Training for Parents Helps Families Succeed**

#### **School Bus Brings Parents to School for Job Training Classes**

Parents in a rural, mountainous area wanted to attend job training workshops which were to be offered at the school site, but many lacked automobiles or gas money and there was no public transportation. Many of the

parents had children in Head Start at the same site, so the solution was to schedule Head Start parent/child socialization classes in the morning for parents and their children, and offer job training activities in the afternoon for the parents while the children were provided child care. Parents and children then rode the school bus home in the afternoon. **Southern Trinity USD (Trinity County)**

#### **Healthy Start Serves as Bridge to Employment**

Parents who originally came in to Healthy Start as service recipients became active members of the advisory group and became resources for other parents.

Some of them moved on to employment with the school district or other agencies as a result of the contacts they found through Healthy Start. Based on this positive outcome, new schools coming on-line added Family Advocate positions to be filled by bi-lingual, bi-cultural parents from the school community. **Santa Ana (Orange County)**

#### **Seasonal Unemployment Turned to Advantage**

Agricultural workers in the fields from sun-up to sun-down arrive home exhausted and with little energy for adult education or community activities. Yet many of these parents had a strong interest in learning English to better themselves and improve their children's chances for success. The winter agricultural hiatus was turned to advantage by a rural collaborative which used the time to schedule parent education activities, including ESL classes. **Pajaro Valley (Santa Cruz County)**

#### **Focus on Jobs Energizes Community**

A small, isolated desert community capitalized on the expansion of a nearby state prison to address the extremely high (24%) unemployment rate and low median wages (under \$15,000) of its residents. As they described it, their community "suffers all the

ills that befall a community where employment opportunities are limited, educational and skill levels are low, and hope for better tomorrow continues to fade." The collaborative partnership, which included business and civic leaders, involved the state prison in the development of a job training program to prepare local residents for a variety of jobs to be created by prison expansion. The State Department of Employment, GAIN, JTPA, Community Action Agency and others cooperated to develop job training programs for adults, and local fast food businesses (the only other non-agricultural employers of any size in town) sponsored occupational awareness activities for high school students, taught work skills on site visits, and helped to link educational and business skills with the math and reading curriculum. Seventy volunteers spent 3 weekends building the Healthy Start Center. In the process it "empowered so many people so quickly that it ... became the overriding focus for improving the future of children and families in our valley". **Blythe (Riverside County)**

### **Parents Trained to Staff Healthy Start Sites, Gain Needed Employment Skills**

As part of its training for parents to staff Healthy Start sites, one collaborative made imaginative use of its resources to give parents needed experience in workplace technology. Parents were taught to use school computers for basic word processing and data maintenance, how to use FAX and modem equipment, E-mail and basic Internet access all with an emphasis on improving language and writing skills. Informational classes introduced parents to school operations through familiarizing them with school rules and policies, and basic county and county government functions. With a view to encourage active participation in citizenship, they provided informational classes on naturalization, voting registration

and the obligations and rights of citizens. **Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)**

### **Mobilizing Primary and Informal Supports**

#### **Parents Assisted to Form Youth Sports Leagues**

Development of recreational activities for youth was a high priority for parents and school staff in an elementary school whose parents were already mobilized around drug prevention activities. The City Recreation Department agreed to train parents to become coaches and managers of youth sports leagues which expanded the recreation options available while modeling sportsmanship, team work, and drug-free fun. **Redwood City (San Mateo County)**

#### **Community Cooperative Food Purchase Program**

Several sites initiated SHARE programs, a USDA self-help, cooperative food distribution programs to be run by parent volunteers. Participants pay nominal fees and work a few hours a week at the distribution center in exchange for groceries. In addition to substantially supplementing family nutrition, participating adults contribute much needed help to their communities. Linked to this were other activities such as food collection drives with a theme of family unity and community building, and nutrition education. **Woodland (Yolo County) and Pomona (Los Angeles County)**

#### **Parents and Realtors Tackle Housing Needs**

A high transiency rate within a school cluster contributed to fragmentation of school programs for children. Most families lived in apartments which often were overcrowded. Access to information about vacancies was a problem for those with limited literacy. A Housing Action team was formed with parents, school personnel and local real estate

representatives. Realtors provided a list of all investor-owned multi-family residences and the mailing labels. Parents and Healthy Start personnel then sent letters to owners inviting them to place listings at the school site. Parents were notified of the service and the response was overwhelmingly positive from both sides. The Housing Match Center is staffed daily by parent volunteers who receive training in office skills and specific training from the realty group. Child care and office skills training are provided to the parents. Data on matches made is collected and will be compared to student achievement. **Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)**

### **City Redevelopment Agency Collaborates to Address Housing Needs**

Affordable, decent housing emerged as a priority need through a collaborative in which the local City Redevelopment Agency participated to further the city's housing goals. The result was a partnership between the school district and the city (which funded half of the coordinator position) to create a Neighborhood Revitalization Program including an Urban Peace Corps, Tenant Certification Program, and Community Resident Council linked to Healthy Start. **Morgan Hill (Santa Clara County)**

### **Disaster Preparedness for Neighborhoods Offered at School Site**

A Southern California community located in uncomfortable- proximity to major earthquake faults incorporated a Neighborhood Preparedness Program provided by the Fire Department into its Healthy Start activities. The aim is to develop neighborhood self-sufficiency following disasters, such as earthquakes, when emergency fire and medical services may not be immediately available. Parents, school staff and other community members were to be trained in first aid, CPR, home safety, disaster

preparedness and light search and rescue. Fire Department personnel build positive rapport with students, parents, and community members through on-site visits and presentations and 3 day disaster preparedness classes for 100 adults annually. The pool of trained adults will serve as a pool of volunteers in the event of a disaster to mobilize at the school site after their own homes are secured. **Pomona (Los Angeles County)**

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- Several sites noted that even if services were available to meet identified needs they would remain unused unless families were aware of them. English and other language newspapers, radio and television stations were approached and often agreed to publish ongoing feature articles about Healthy Start activities and community notices about special upcoming activities such as Health Fairs. In at least one instance a weekly newspaper donated several hundred dollars of advertising space a month in the paper.
- In very isolated or rural areas announcements about Healthy Start activities take place at the relatively few public gatherings which draw people together such as at school board, town council, Chamber of Commerce or service club meetings.
- Several schools located near housing projects were able to get space set aside in the housing project for Healthy Start activities. The "outstationed centers" often then became the focus of parent related activities such as parent education and activity classes and groups. In some instances the Housing authority was able to provide some child care slots to facilitate class attendance, job searches and other activities leading to resident self-sufficiency.

- Existing neighborhood associations often proved to be the best organized and most cohesive forces in neighborhoods.- They are as diverse as Neighborhood Associations facilitated by local police departments to combat crime and social disorganization, and ethnic affiliation groups such as the Filipino American Association. The groups often have a strong interest in and incentive to improve and enhance the community in which they live.
- Don't overlook the public transit system as a possible resource. Several sites were successful in persuading public transit systems to change bus routes to improve access for parents who relied on public transportation to get to community activities, shopping, medical care, and other services.

- Service clubs are an important part of the community fabric and often sponsor projects which can be directly relevant to Healthy Start goals. For instance, Lions Club International has a long-standing interest in promoting good vision care and is a resource at times for glasses and other vision related services. Rotary International is sponsoring RotaCare mobile health screening vans in some communities.
- Professional associations proved to be a good source of volunteers from their retired and active members. For example, chapters of the California School Employees Assoc. (CSEA) provide volunteer tutors, while retired employees from the California Department of Employment Development (EDD) used their valuable experience to conduct a variety of employment related workshops.

## RECONFIGURING RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS

*Strong collaboratives identify existing resources within the school site, the school district, and other child- and family-serving partners within the community. Analysis and discussion of the strengths and weakness of the service providers together with a thorough understanding of the schools' involvement in reform efforts often leads to new and unexpected opportunities. Building upon school restructuring efforts engages classroom teachers as partners as the collaborative seeks to improve the whole life of the child. Several instances below demonstrate how partnership resources can be configured to directly affect classroom outcomes.*

*Comprehensive school health services are a goal of Healthy Start which can sometimes be daunting to develop. Noted below are examples of widely different approaches to reconfiguring health care resources, each responding to unique community opportunities, yet springing from concepts articulated in the Health Framework and Healthy Kids, Healthy California.*

### **Academic Success for Students**

#### **School Admissions Committee Plays Key Role in Identification for Service**

Each new family entering a child in school is involved in an assessment process that includes not only academic assessments but a family assessment as well, to acquaint families with services available and to identify service needs at the outset. Families are then assigned a volunteer mentor to guide them throughout the first days at the new school and help them link up with a variety of Healthy Start related activities. Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)

#### **School Library Opens After School**

Homework clubs and recreational reading were seen as keys to improving academic success for elementary students. Teaming up

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- Expansion of the Student Study Team (SST) to include Healthy Start staff has been successfully used to evaluate and plan interventions for health, family and social problems of students. In this model of a multi-disciplinary team, the Healthy Start case manager serves as the liaison with other collaborative partners.

with the city library and local service clubs, the small school library was opened after school as a Homework Club center, additional books were purchased from donated funds, and a Book Exchange club was begun, staffed by volunteers. Covina (Los Angeles County)

#### **Parents Learn How to Help Children with Homework**

"We want to help, but don't understand how", one parent said. "If you can teach me, I can help teach my children". The clarity of that insight led an elementary school to redirect its Chapter I and School Improvement funds to expand Parent Reading Workshops and parent training to involve parents in Homework Club activities, and to develop ESL classes on site for Spanish speaking parents. Pittsburg (Contra Costa County)

#### **Homework Center Staffed by Parents Improves English Language Skills of Children and Parents**

Southeast Asian families, many of the parents speaking only Hmong, Khmer, or Vietnamese, constituted half the enrollment of a K-6 school in the Central Valley. Few of the service providers could deliver culturally competent services, and school and agency

staff were dependent on child interpreters. Increasing English language literacy for parents, supporting the children's academic achievement, and development of culturally competent services were a priority. A Homework Center staffed by categorically funded primary language tutors was expanded by using parent volunteers trained as tutors and monitors to help children who had no place to study and no one to help them with homework. English language classes were offered through Adult Education for parents. Service providers, supported by Healthy Start funds, worked together to develop methods of providing culturally competent health, parent education and other prevention activities using parents trained and paid to act as interpreters while efforts were made by providers to hire and train professionals from the various language groups and ethnic backgrounds. **Fresno (Fresno County)**

### **Title 1 "Twilight "Classes Boost Academic Success**

A school reform effort linked to Healthy Start at two elementary schools provided classes for academic assistance and related counseling for preschoolers, K-12 students, and their parents. Classes were held 3 nights per week from 4 to 7pm and conducted in the five languages spoken in the district. Participants were evenly divided between parents and students and attendance was high. **Elk Grove (Sacramento County)**

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- Another approach used college students paid from Title 1 funds to man an after school "Homework Hotline". Students with no one at home to help them with their homework were targeted for after school "Homework Clubs".

### **Literacy Programs Support Success for Children and Parents**

With the help of their local library and the American Association of University Women (AAUW), one elementary school began an after school Homework Club and a Story Hour 2 days per week. The Healthy Start grant included a part time program aide to expand these activities to four days a week and to open the school library after-school. Volunteers initiated a Book Exchange program to encourage recreational reading and additional books were donated by the PTA and Optimist Clubs. ESL classes through Adult education were relocated to the school and additional parent education classes were provided by Head Start, Even Start, and Healthy Start staff collaborated to provide health and nutrition education programs. A Job Center was created on-site and staffed part time by volunteers from the local California State Employment Development Department (EDD). Weekly Job Clubs help parents learn to fill out applications, develop resumes, search out employment openings and develop a job search plan. Volunteers provide moral support and accompany parents to initial interviews or to sign up for job training. **Covina (Los Angeles County)**

### **Local Business Helps Develop Mentors for Teens**

Seeking to expand middle school students contact with positive role models and mentors, the collaborative developed a plan to have 20 volunteers recruited by a local marketing firm from among area businesses. The volunteer mentors would be screened and matched with students by Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and supervised by Healthy Start staff during on site after school activities. The program also included a Job Shadowing Day when the students would accompany the mentors to their jobs or college classes. **Salinas (Monterey County)**

### **School Staff Association joins with Parent, Teacher, Student Association**



### **(PTSA) and Student Body Association**

A high school experiencing rapid increases in low-income Hispanic and Vietnamese students enlisted school staff, parent, and student government associations to provide volunteer tutors, after school homework clubs, and peers helping peers for the newcomers. The goal was to increase the academic success of the newcomers and reduce the numbers of students dropping out. **Huntington Beach (Orange County)**

### **Community Agencies Support School Restructuring**

Public and private non-profits providing after school recreation and group activities supported their school restructuring efforts by scheduling activities during the afternoon on the two shortened school days each week. Adolescent students were provided with structured and positive activities which reinforced the school restructuring goal of greater student involvement with community prevention and treatment resources. **Avenal (Kings County)**

### **Elementary School Works to Reduce Dropouts from Middle/High School**

Increasing the self-confidence and success of students and parent involvement in the transition of students from elementary to secondary schools was a high priority outcome for an elementary school in the Sacramento Valley. To that end, trainings were provided for parents on the middle school Homework Hotline, graduation requirements, courses of study, behavioral expectations and disciplinary procedures. An alliance of representatives from the secondary schools organized semi-annual joint meetings of PTAs and other home-site groups, and were represented on the Healthy Start Advisory Council. Sixth grade students visited the middle school campus, and secondary school students volunteered as mentors/tutors and as peer counselors to elementary students. **Chico (Butte County)**

### **Student Portfolios Reinforce Positive Accomplishments**

Students enrolled in a Court Day School or Community School program by a Juvenile Court order or following expulsion from a comprehensive high school are the target population for one Healthy Start collaborative. Students in the 7-12th grade program are "often very discouraged academically and very apathetic about participating in academically oriented classroom assignments." To help shift students into becoming active participants in shaping their lives, students develop "Whole Life Portfolios" to document their needs, interests, goals, and accomplishments. The portfolios "serve as a natural focal point around which a group of advisors (school staff, collaborative members, and local businesses) can organize to support and guide the student." Students are involved in community service activities and complete special projects, for example, designing, building and launching a model rocket before an audience of their parents and community members. The enthusiasm developed by these activities, which require expanding some academic skills, is then channeled into other academic pursuits. Documentation of the students' positive accomplishments is expected to reinforce positive social and academic behaviors. **Madera County**

### **Juvenile Hall School Linked to School District Through SASI System**

For youth incarcerated in the Juvenile Hall or Boys Ranch, the inability of the institutions' teaching staff to access school records from the home district was a barrier to implementing an educational program to address the youths' academic deficits. Public school records arrived very late or not at all. Students leaving the institutions had a very difficult time reentering school and far too many did not return to school. To address this barrier the institutional schools sites

purchased an integrated attendance data system (SASI) which could link the institutional schools with the home district of the majority of incarcerated youth. On-line timely access to school, health and demographic data facilitated assessment and implementation of a program to address academic deficits while youth were incarcerated and improved the transition of youth back into community education and employment training when youth were released. **Contra Costa County**

### **Improving Health to Improve Success**

#### **Primary Prevention of Dental Disease**

Concerned about the level of dental disease leading to high rates of absenteeism among its students, and the lack of nearby, affordable dental care resources, a small-town collaborative successfully convinced its municipal water district to fluoridate the water supply. This primary prevention strategy was coupled with the addition of an on-site Medi-Cal eligibility worker a few hours a month, increasing CHDP assessments (including dental assessments), strengthening the dental health prevention program, and seeking resources to meet emergency dental needs. **Coalinga (Fresno County)**

#### **Head Start Teams With Elementary School to Provide Health Education**

As part of a collaborative preventive health initiative, a school Health Aide and the Head Start Health Coordinator teamed up to present a series of workshops for parents covering such topics as safety in the home recognizing and responding to children's illnesses, women's health, dental care and a nutrition education series. Additional workshops were scheduled to respond to parents requests for specific topics. **Covina (Los Angeles County)**

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- In several instances Head Start and Healthy Start combined resources to co-locate parent activities, combine health and social service and transportation programs and resources. Parents participating in Head Start activities can naturally transition to participation in their children's elementary school activities.

#### **Medi-Cal Managed Care Outreach System Coordinated with Healthy Start**

In a county implementing a managed care plan for Medi-Cal clients, outreach to low income and Medi-Cal clients was envisioned as a way to promote preventive health care practices and better access and utilization of health care resources. It became apparent that the health care initiative and Healthy Start shared common visions and could complement each other. Working together, they developed a system of outreach teams for neighborhoods served by the Healthy Start sites. Healthy Start case managers targeted low-income families who are uninsured or under-insured, and the managed care team focused on the Medi-Cal population to improve access to and improve the health status of much of the low-income population in the schools neighborhoods. **Fairfield (Solano County)**

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- Counties implementing managed care health systems often have similar goals to Healthy Start and the planning processes can benefit both. Focus groups at one Healthy Start site identified a need for an after hours medical advice phone line. This fit with the managed care goal of reducing inappropriate use of hospital emergency rooms, and plans were initiated to establish a "Nurse Advice" line.

### **EPSDT School Nurse Unit Created**

A County CHDP Program obtained approval from the State CHDP program to create a School Nurse EPSDT Unit under contract with the County Health Department. The contract allowed the school nurses to provide the full scope of services to Medi-cal children at the school site including case management, scheduling of appointments, follow-up to reinforce physicians' instructions, home visits, education and documentation. A funding stream was thus created to support the positions on an on-going basis. **Marin County**

### **Urban Farm and Garden Program To Improve Children's Nutrition**

Parents were concerned about the poor diets of children at school. More than half of the K-3 students received free and reduced price breakfast and lunch at school, but the meals were high in fats and sugar, unappealing and often uneaten. Using an existing Farm and Garden project developed by the PTA as the centerpiece, the collaborative integrated Farm and Garden activities with health and wellness concepts and practices as suggested in the Health Framework. The children's experiences growing vegetables and grains were carried into preparation of nutritious food to supplement the breakfast, lunch and snack program. Food Service Staff added a salad bar to the daily lunch menu, and the dietitian worked with the children to creatively plan low-fat school menus. Farm and Garden activities were integrated into the curriculum to teach reading, math and science skills, and special community projects with neighborhood grocery stores, restaurants and Farmer's market extended the children's knowledge and consumer competence (and that of their parents) in the community. **Berkeley (Alameda County)**

### **School Tackles High Rates of Cancer and Cardiovascular Disease Among Latinos**

According to a large medical school in the Los Angeles area, cancer and cardiovascular disease were among the top causes of death for Latinos in the cluster school area. The mostly Latino neighborhood contained many recent arrivals working in low paid jobs with no health insurance and little access to preventive health care. Studies of California's Latino population indicated that with longer residence in California, Latinos increased their consumption of fats and decreased fiber intake, dietary practices associated with increased risk of cancer and heart disease. The Healthy Start collaborative determined to improve the cardiovascular performance and decrease cholesterol levels of children and families in the community.

Working with a nearby teaching hospital and university, a culturally competent strategy was designed and implemented, integrating health and nutrition education within the school curriculum and district Food Services. During first grade physicals and subsequent screenings for older students cholesterol levels were collected and retested every six months. A new Science and Health curriculum was under development with the help of the School of Medicine. The school breakfast and lunch program was improved to increase fiber and reduce fat. Nutrition education and cooking programs helped families implement nutritional changes in the family diets. Another cancer prevention program taught parents and students how to reduce their risk of cancer and DATE programs expanded smoking prevention classes in all schools in the cluster. Parents were encouraged to attend with their children. An adult aerobics class was expanded and ESL classes integrated good nutrition and meal planning into language classes. **Lennox (Los Angeles County)**

### **Idea Nugget!**

- ESL classes provided by Adult Education included in the content and vocabulary words and activities relevant to health, nutrition, mental health and parenting. As an example, one exercise promoted healthy meal planning and taught the vocabulary needed to understand the nutrition concepts, shop intelligently, and prepare the food.

- Several collaboratives have held concurrent "Health Fairs" offering immunizations, CHDP assessments, WIC nutritional program enrollment, applications for Food Stamps and Medi-Cal and other services. New students and their parents were introduced to preventive health care, and collaborative partners found it a great time to work together on a common goal

## **Hospital to School Transition Improved**

The Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) assisted a hospital to set up a protocol for transmitting status and care needs of children returning to school after hospitalization or Emergency Room treatment. They also provided training to school personnel to meet the needs of medically fragile children enrolled in the district. **Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County)**

### **Idea Nuggets!**

- A small school located 20 miles from the nearest pharmacy arranged with the public transit system to deliver prescribed medications to the residents, benefiting not just children but persons of all ages.
- The ever-present head lice problem generated many strategies, such as education workshops for parents, close tracking and follow-up to make sure children were treated and returned to school promptly, hands-on shampooing and laundering instruction for parents, purchase of combs and medicated shampoos through the county health department, requesting service clubs to purchase the needed supplies, and in one case, installation of a shower and laundry facility on site.
- Kindergarten registration days offer opportunities for introducing collaborative health services to incoming kindergartners, their siblings and parents.

## **Integration and Blending of Funding to Support Healthy Start Activities**

### **Funding Streams Combined to Fund Family Service Advocates at Multiple Sites**

Three small elementary schools had funded part time community liaisons for several years using school and special grant funding sources. As the collaborative developed a comprehensive vision for integrating school linked services, the determination was made to reconfigure the Community Liaison positions as Family Service Advocates and to fund them using a combination of Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Education (DATE) funds, Chapter (now Title 1, Primary Intervention Program (PIP) and Healthy Start funds. In order to provide a seamless transition for Head Start students and families into the elementary schools, Healthy Start and Head Start programs were co-located and cross trained with provider agency staff and collaborative community members. **Eureka (Humboldt County)**

### **Two Counties Cooperate to Provide Services to Small Rural School District**

A small rural school district located in a remote mountainous area drew students from 2 different counties making coordinated provision of health and social services doubly difficult. The remote location and treacherous

roads, often made impassable by rain or snow in the winter, made travel to obtain services very difficult. The two counties cooperated to cross train an eligibility worker from one county to take applications for AFDC, Medi-Cal and Food Stamps on site at the school. The applications for the residents in the second county would be mailed to the county office for completion. Outstation days for county eligibility services clinics, and nutrition services were scheduled at the Family Center on the same days whenever possible. Job training workshops were scheduled on the same days as Head Start program activities and parents were allowed to travel in to activities on the school bus so that they could attend morning socialization classes with their children and attend job training classes in the afternoon while child care was provided. **Southern Trinity (Trinity County)**

### **Categorical Funding for Students at Risk Blended**

A single school site became a demonstration site for the blending and decategorization of more than a dozen sources of educational funding. As part of the Healthy Start operational planning, a detailed inventory, including available funding streams, was developed. The final plan integrated the categorical resources into a unified plan for at risk students, rather than a "set of parallel programs with part time staff". The plan supported and complemented the Healthy Start and school restructuring goals. **Santa Ana (Orange County)**

### **Case Management Targets Children with Relative Caregivers**

Children living with relative caretakers accounted for almost 10% of one school's population. According to the relatives themselves and the Student Study Team, these children were often those at highest risk of school failure, were far more likely to have unmet health needs, and were less likely to have active involvement with or eligibility for

other case management services. Compounding the problem was the discovery that the relatives may or may not have legal guardianship thus creating difficulties when consent forms or authorizations needing parent or guardianship signatures were needed. Case management for these children and families was given highest priority through the collaborative partners and Healthy Start staff. **Pittsburg (Contra Costa County)**

#### **Idea Nugget!**

- Computer-linked electronic bulletin boards were used to link schools, agencies and church social service programs in an information network for giving and receiving information about upcoming events, change in services availability and other non-confidential information. Several sites had the active assistance of parents and businesses with expertise in this area to design and implement the networks.

### **Collaborative Provides Information and Referral Training for All Partners**

To further the goal of family self-sufficiency, a two-school collaborative with significant participation from state, county and private agencies chose to establish a network of information and referral providers among line staff in each partner agency and school. Information and referral training was given cooperatively by all partners with each providing specifics of their own service. One day was devoted to county-wide agencies with presentations in the morning and tours of the agencies in the afternoon. By the end of the training series, each trainee would know: what services each collaborative program (including the schools and Healthy Start) provides, including eligibility criteria, agency intake and assessment processes, and who the Healthy Start contact at each agency would be; how to provide referral

information and assistance to parents while fostering parent control and decision-making; and what printed or computerized resource guides and information was available. The training was sponsored by Adult Education in order provide in-service credits for participants where appropriate. **Alisal (Monterey County)**